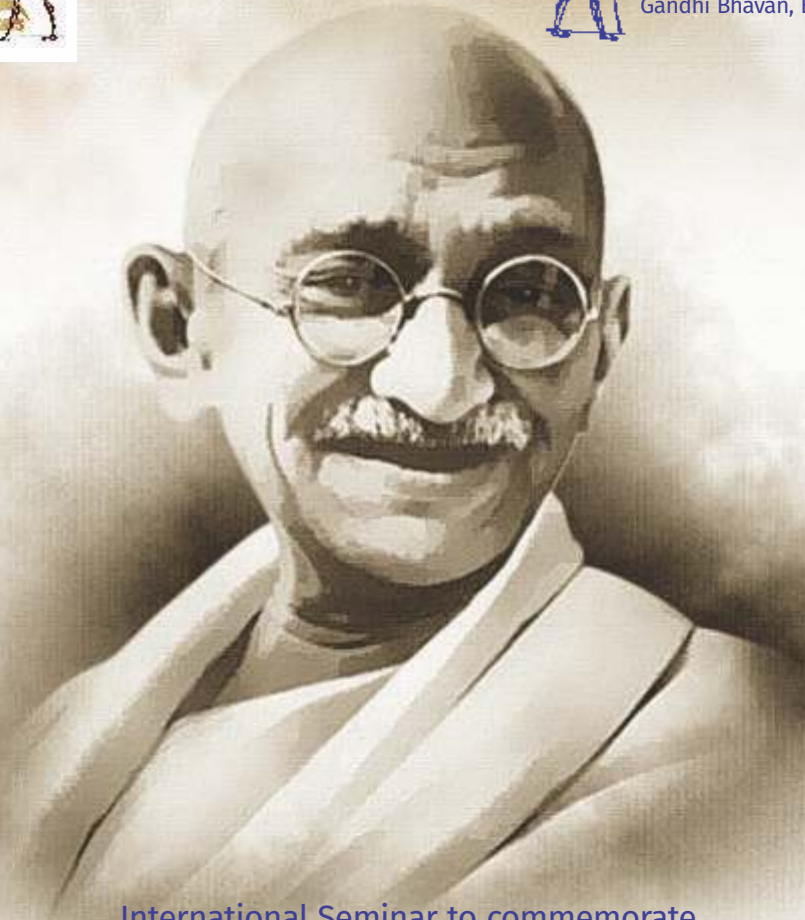




**Karnataka Gandhi
Smarak Nidhi**
Gandhi Bhavan, Bengaluru



International Seminar to commemorate
75th Anniversary of the Central Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, New Delhi

MAHATMA GANDHI FOR THE 21ST CENTURY **Building A Future of Peace, Justice, Fraternity and Sustainable Development**



**24-25
August 2024**



Gandhi Bhavan
Kumara Park East
Bengaluru - 560 001

WHY THIS SEMINAR?

An attempt to understand contemporary global challenges in the light of Gandhian and other humanistic philosophies and actions

Mahatma Gandhi was the greatest votary of peace, justice and universal brotherhood in the modern history of humankind. Although he was the preeminent leader of India's struggle for freedom from British colonial rule, he was truly a Vishwa Manav, a citizen of the world. He envisioned India's national liberation as an integral part of - indeed, as a catalyst for - the efforts to create a new and better world.

He championed Truth (*Satya*) and Non-Violence (*Ahimsa*) as ethical principles of eternal and worldwide relevance. Among all the leaders of national liberation struggles in the last century, Gandhi stands apart for his unwavering commitment to the essential unity of humanity, transcending the barriers of nationality, race, religion, caste and class.

Gandhi died - he fell to the bullets of a religious extremist - nearly eight decades ago. But his thoughts and ideals, like those of other saints and social reformers belonging to other countries and cultures, are immortal.

At a time when India and the rest of the world are witnessing alarming levels of religious disharmony, he speaks to us in a voice that urges dialogue for mutual understanding, trust, respect and peaceful co-existence. At a time when the world is beset with steep inequalities both within and among nations, his concepts of *Sarvodaya* (*Welfare of All*) and *Antyodaya* (*Welfare of the Last Man in Society*) show us the path toward a more just and equitable world.

Gandhi's categorical denunciation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction as “sins against humanity” imparts strength to the worldwide campaign for peace and disarmament. He was one of the pioneers of Sustainable Development. His famous exhortation - “**Mother Earth has enough to satisfy everyone's need, but not everyone's greed**” has become a mantra of the Green Movement globally. By describing women as the embodiments of

love, care and compassion, he prophesied that the future evolution of the human species would be led by women.

Gandhi conducted pathbreaking experiments in education, healthcare, nutrition, sanitation, village industries and other areas related to human welfare. Even though times have changed, the essence of these experiments holds important lessons for our world. There is a widespread misconception that he was opposed to modern science and technology. This is not true. He had profound faith, bordering on romance, in the power of scientific knowledge and technological advancements to solve the problems of humanity and aid the search for the truth behind the mysteries of the universe. ***"Everything can be turned into a science or a romance,"*** he said. His warning was directed at the unethical and exploitative use of science and technology. Since the 21st century is going to be shaped by revolutionary technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Robotics, Genetics and others, there is surely a need to understand both their possibilities and perils.

There is another widespread misconception about Gandhi - that, as an advocate of ***Swadeshi (national self-reliance)***, he disfavored international cooperation. This, too, is not true. He wanted a balance between localization and globalization. ***"Interdependence (among nations) is and ought to be as much the ideal of man as (national) self-sufficiency,"*** he said.

Gandhi was a democrat to the core. While being firm in his basic convictions, he was never dogmatic. He was always open to learning from new situations and from others' points of view. He had intrinsic respect for his opponents, and conducted debates and discussions with them in a manner completely free from malice and egotism. At a time when space for dissent and healthy debate is shrinking even in democracies around the world, this Gandhian tradition needs to be revived.

It is obvious that all the above-mentioned thoughts and concerns resonate with the problems and needs of humanity in the 21st century. Therefore, we feel that there is a need to debate and discuss them by bringing together leading thought and action leaders from India and abroad. This is what the International Seminar will attempt to do.

Although the Seminar focuses on Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy and practice, it will enlarge the scope of the debates by providing a platform for diverse, even critical, viewpoints. This, we believe, is essential for making the Seminar meaningful and fruitful for all.

ABOUT THE GANDHI SMARAK NIDHI

After the death of Mahatma Gandhi on 30 January 1948, the Government of India decided to support the establishment of a non-political civil society trust to perpetuate the thoughts and ideals of the Father of the Nation. Accordingly, in 1949, the National Gandhi Memorial Trust or the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi was established as an autonomous body.

The Founding Chairman of the National Gandhi Smarak Nidhi was none other than **Dr Rajendra Prasad**, the first President of India. Its two Vice Chairmen were **Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**. Some of its other illustrious founding trustees were Maulana Abul kalam Azad, Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant, Acharya Kripalani, Jagjivan Ram, G.V. Mavalankar, J.R.D.Tata, G.D. Birla and Yashodara Dasappa.

The organisation has branches in every Indian state, and these branches are independently run by democratically elected managing committees in respective state capitals. 2024 marks the 75th anniversary of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi. In Karnataka, it is headed by **Dr Wooday P. Krishna**, an eminent educationist in Bengaluru.